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ABSTRACT

Intended for teachers of librarians, this guide to the in-basket technique, a simulation teaching method, includes a primer on the use of in-basket techniques, a description of the design of in-basket learning materials, a bibliography of in-basket exercises, and a bibliography of materials on memo writing. Demonstration materials provided were used in the study of school media center administration, academic librarianship, special library management, learning centers, and the administration of information services. (FM)

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In-Basket Simulation Techniques: A Sourcebook

Edited from a Workshop, January 20, 1978

by Martha Jane K. Zachert

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FOREWORD

It is a pleasure, as Chairman of the Continuing Education Committee of the Association of American Library Schools, to have the opportunity to write the foreword to this publication because it came about as the result of much cooperative planning, many hours of unselfish work on the part of the authors, and an enthusiastic reception from AALS members who took the Workshop on January 20, 1978.

The Board of Directors of AALS was extremely supportive of the Continuing Education Committee and most encouraging to us in our desire to have continuing education workshops established. Their advice and helpful suggestions were given most generously.

The entire Committee (1977-78) was interested and contributed ideas: Helen Gothberg, Maurice Marchant, William Nasri, James Nelson, Peggy O'Donnell, and Bernard Vavrek. Special efforts were made by Peggy O'Donnell and James Nelson who, as a subcommittee, planned the Workshop, arranged countless meetings with the instructional staff, planned the publicity, designed the brochure used, and organized the logistics for the day.

Martha Jane Zachert might be designated an "honorary member of the subcommittee" so great was her contribution to the effort. She worked with Peggy and Jim to recruit highly competent individuals who not only wrote original in-basket exercises but also agreed to come to the Workshop presentation to work with small groups in order to provide a more individualized workshop atmosphere. Martha Jane's well-organized approach, hard-working style, and wealth of experience and knowledge of the technique were priceless contributions.

The concept of publishing the compiled in-basket exercises as well as the introduction and background material presented as recorded in this book arose spontaneously from the attendees, who felt that the experience was so valuable that it should be made available to all members of the Association.

The Board of Directors and the Executive Secretary, Janet Phillips, were not only willing to contribute to this project but contributed ideas and suggestions for making the transition from manuscript to publication smooth and efficient.

The Continuing Education Committee takes great pride in having been connected with this source book, the first non-serial publication of the Association.

PAULINE M. VAILLANCOURT
Chairman, Continuing Education Committee

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A PRIMER ON THE USE OF IN-BASKET SIMULATION TECHNIQUES

Martha Jane K. Zachert*

The "in-basket" technique, one of a family of simulation teaching methods, has been discussed for some years in library education literature and for an even longer time in the literature of education for several other professions. Recently, stimulated perhaps by the demands of continuing education participants for "practical" learning experiences, there has been a surge of interest among teachers of library science for information about this technique. Some of the most frequently asked questions at teacher training sessions will be answered first.

What is simulation? It is a representation of reality used in teaching and in research. We are concerned with it here as a teaching/learning technique. Simulation is first person learning, learning by doing. In simulation study the learner is doing what he will be doing on the job, he is doing it in a situation that is as job-like as possible, and he knows that this is what he is doing.

Why do we use simulation in teaching? First, for skills training, and to provide this training in a setting that is very similar to the "real world" of libraries. Secondly, to promote positive affective learning. Problem-centered learning is the favored learning mode of adults. It seems to them more "practical" than other kinds of learning. Especially in continuing education when the learning is presented as a representation of familiar situations, it is tension-reducing for adults who may be returning to learning after a long period of absence. Because the learning seems practical and because the simulated job situation seems familiar to adults, their motivation is very high when these experiential methods are used. The positive feelings generated by simulation learning can be used as a bridge to other, more traditional methodologies. You and I, as experienced teachers, may know that what these particular learners need is some good, strong, cognitive input. But to ask them to sit still and

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* Martha Jane K. Zachert is Professor, College of Librarianship, University of South Carolina.

listen to a more or less theoretical lecture will frequently get the whole learning experience off to a disadvantageous beginning - disadvantageous because the learners feel negative toward it. If you begin with a simulation of their real world, however, you quickly get the learners to the point of saying, "Ah, yes, I see that I do need to learn more about this." Then they are ready to listen to, and learn from, your cognitive input.

Which classroom techniques are included in simulation method? The simulation method embraces action mazes, in-baskets, role-play and games. Because of their degree of reality, some of these techniques appear threatening to some students initially. I will list them in the order of their non-threat, as perceived by my students over a period of years. In each of these techniques at least some of the students act in the first person mode, that is, as library administrators, workers or users. In some of them all students are in the first person mode simultaneously. At some times, with some of the techniques, some students act in third person roles that are necessary for group learning, for example, as observers, recorders, or resource persons. In the well-managed classroom in which simulation techniques are being used, the roles will be carefully rotated so that each student experiences a balance of first-person and third-person roles during the total learning experience, whether it is a one day workshop or a semester course.

Which problem-centered classroom methods are not simulations? The most familiar ones used in library science seem to be the seminar and the case study. Both are problem-centered. Seminars always include group discussions; case study usually does also. Seminars and case studies focus on intellectual aspects of problems. They invite the learners to talk about problems rather than to be actively involved in problems as participants in a work situation. Seminars and group study of cases utilize communications techniques that have become traditional in classroom settings. Simulation, on the other hand, fosters learning through doing, through making decisions and through acting as a part of the problem. Simulation method utilizes small group communication techniques that are more characteristic of work groups than of classroom settings.

Now, to more specifics of in-basket use, let's consider the nature of in-basket materials. These materials are representations of the paperwork faced by a worker at any level in an organization, both the paperwork that comes to that worker and that which he sends to others. The technique can be used for learning about any position in an organization that requires paperwork. If we accept the idea that paperwork is part of the routine work in virtually every library position, then the in-basket technique becomes a useful vehicle for conveying the reality of library work to learners. An individual's in-basket in a real situation is a gateway to his attention, and ultimately, it is a gateway to his decision-making and action.

Single pieces of paper are called "in-basket messages" or "in-basket documents." When several of them are used together, they are called, collectively, an "in-basket exercise." It is obvious from this that messages may be used individually, or in sequence (to represent the phenomenon of the unfolding problem); or two or more related messages may be used together (to represent the moment-in-time when the worker picks up all the accumulated messages and reads through them). Learning comes as a student considers what he will do as a result of each message, and in doing it, that is, in preparing the "out-basket" messages.

Uses of the in-basket technique

1. The technique may be used as an orientation to a particular problem, or to an array of problems to be considered. Or the use may be as orientation to simulation methods in general, because according to the testimony of an overwhelming majority of students, in-basket messages and exercises are the easiest of the simulation techniques to become accustomed to. In-basket exercises are also useful for orienting members of a learning group to each other. There is considerable value to informal, tension-free discussion among adults especially at the beginning of a continuing education learning experience. Naturally, when we wish to use in-basket exercises in this way, we do not include in the exercise any message the discussion of which would incur high risk for the members of the learning group or any that would result in a high degree of conflict within the learning group.

2. To set the stage for cognitive input, or, as I said earlier, as a bridge to traditional teaching methods.

3. To initiate a search for factual information. Students need to learn that they ought to be able to find factual information as they need it to carry out their jobs. Very realistic messages can be conveyed to students as if they were workers in a library, messages which will require them to seek the factual information that they need and thus develop their skills for doing so.

4. To stimulate discussion, whether of single messages the students have worked on individually, or of an exercise in which students consider together a variety of messages.

In-basket exercises that are used for orientation and as discussion stimulants result in in-class activity. Setting the stage for cognitive input may be followed by in-class activity, such as viewing a film or listening to a lecture, or by an out-of-class assignment, which might also be viewing a film, listening to a recorded lecture, or reading. Using an in-basket message to initiate a search for factual information is usually setting the stage for an assignment because the student must then seek the factual information outside the classroom.

5. As a bridge to other simulation techniques, especially roleplay. That is, we can use in-basket messages to provide a situational context for roleplay and to lead beginning roleplayers or perhaps reluctant roleplayers into playing a particular role. (Note the example "Using Management Data in the Planning of Reference and Bibliographic Service" later in this volume.)

6. As a component in a "sustained simulation." A sustained simulation is an integrated system for teaching/learning. It uses multiple simulation techniques along with a library model that is moving through time for comprehensive study of some aspect of librarianship. (Two examples of sustained simulations are included in MJK Zachert, Simulation Teaching of Library Administration (Bowker, 1975) pp. 185-293.)

7. For skills practice. This use can be made in or out of class. We might practice such skills as establishing priorities for work, making decisions, initiating action in oneself or in others, or simple skill in developing good work habits and in carrying out established procedures.

8. For testing, in or out of class. The same kinds of messages used in the classwork can be used for evaluation of the individual work of students. Virtually all testing authorities agree that to use for evaluation purposes a method that is unfamiliar to students through prior classwork is unfair.

Types of problems that can be used in in-basket simulations.

1. Problems that reflect relations with staff, the public, business associates and professional associates. These problems can revolve around relations with individuals in these groups or with a group as a whole.

2. Problems that stem from work habits: organizing work, scheduling work for self or others; communicating for self or others; delegating work and/or authority; and feedback from mistakes of oneself or of others.

3. Problems that stem from the specifics of work in the various library functional areas, e.g., administration,technical services, reference and information work. In-basket messages can illustrate the types of problems that come up, can introduce students to the jargon of the work, and can provide practice in specific skills.

4. Problems that might be called "typical" or recurring emergencies. These include complaints, conflict in orders from above, time conflict, personality conflict, conflict of interest, withdrawal of resources, or any breakdown in the system that would be accompanied by paperwork. The emergency may be obvious and immediate, or the message might include merely a hint of future crisis unless preventive action is taken. This category does not include fires, sudden serious illness or breakdown of the plumbing, but rather the kinds of emergencies which would normally come to the worker's attention through phone calls or memos, perhaps through correspondence.

Classroom Management of In-Basket Learning

When in-basket messages are assigned as out-of-class work, they are treated much as any other assignment. The out-basket products of the student's work are shared with other students for discussion and critique, submitted to the teacher for evaluation, or both. It is at this point that they may be used as a bridge to roleplay for they have introduced a problem and started students responding to that problem as if they were in the actual situation.

When a group of in-basket messages is to be used in class, the teacher's management activities are as depicted in Figure 1. Note that there may be time gaps between steps 1 and 2 if the explanation and skills instruction occur at the beginning of a course and exercises are to be used throughout the course. At each introduction of new material after the first, the process begins with step 2. Steps 2 through 9 may take place during the same class session, or there may be a break between 2 and 3 and/or between 3 and 4. If the material is lengthy or complicated, it should be introduced and distributed with sufficient lead time that students will come to the discussion session ready to discuss it. If the material is relatively simple, or if the class is quite sophisticated about in-basket methods, steps 2 through 9, carried out during the same session will present no problems.

Debriefing calls for teacher skills in leading discussions and should be focussed on the objectives of the particular exercise. These objectives may be content-oriented, or they may include objectives related to both content, communication skills and affective reactions of the students. The teacher should come to the debriefing with several lead questions ready; they should be specific rather than open-ended in order to elicit detailed responses. The order in which the student groups prioritized the various messages can be compared and the rationale of each group examined. The nature of each response, its intent, content, mode, and tone, can be examined and critiqued. A two-sided question which always draws discussion is "In what ways does this exercise seem realistic to you; in what ways does it seem unrealistic?" Responses can be enlightening as to student experience and can provide insight into work situations. As in any other group discussion, the teacher is responsible for pacing the discussion and cutting it off when it has ceased to be productive.

Evaluation of In-Basket Learning

Given objectives for each use of in-basket material, evaluation of student learning can take place in relation to these objectives. If the objective was to stimulate discussion, then evaluate each student's

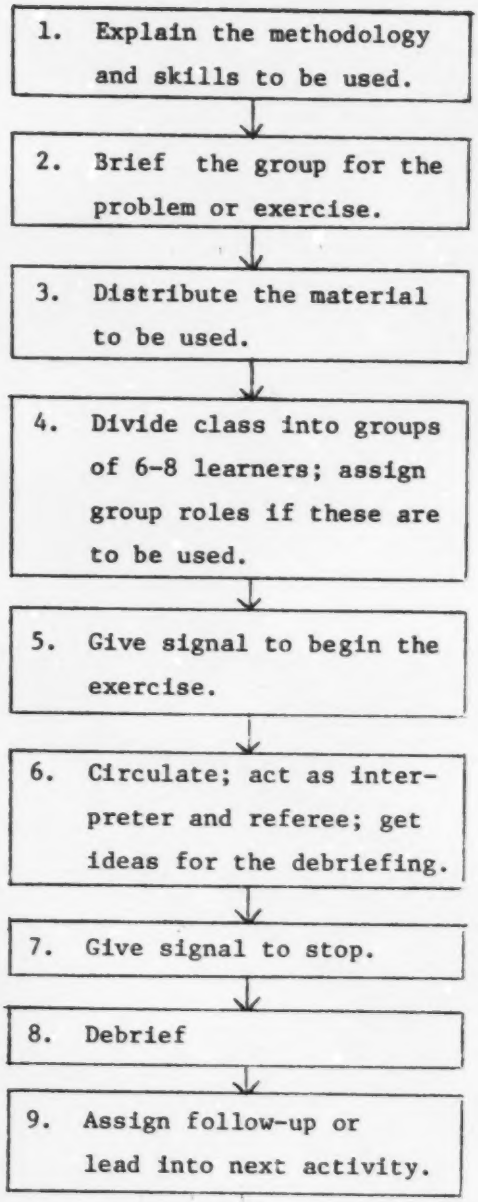
1. Explain the methodology and skills to be used.
2. Brief the group for the problem or exercise.
3. Distribute the material to be used.
4. Divide class into groups of 6-8 learners; assign group roles if these are to be used.
5. Give signal to begin the exercise.
6. Circulate; act as interpreter and referee; get ideas for the debriefing.
7. Give signal to stop.
8. Debrief
9. Assign follow-up or lead into next activity.

FIGURE 1. Steps in the Use of an In-Class In-Basket Exercise.

contributions as such. If the objective was to gather factual information out-of-class and present it in an appropriate format, then evaluate both information and format on established criteria. Some materials, of course, are designed to relate to combinations of objectives; all objectives should be considered in the evaluation. Problems are most likely to arise from objectives dealing with prioritizing, decision-making and other activities for which "rights" and "wrongs" are either unknown or not well-stated in library related literature. Testing authorities advise the use of checklists for evaluating discussion and out-basket messages. The development of such a checklist with a class can, in itself, be an insightful experience for learners.

Responses of Learners

Marilyn Garrett has made detailed observations and study of learner responses, and I've asked her to answer some questions about this aspect of classroom use of in-basket materials.

MJZ: Will you first describe briefly, please, the kind of teaching situation you were in, the kind and number of students in your classes?

MG: I was teaching in a College of Education certification program for school media specialists which offered an undergraduate major and a Masters degree program in media education. In-basket communications were developed for use with management and administration classes of 9 to 23 students. In my early use of in-baskets I quickly found that students who had no prior experience working or interning in media centers did not have a reality base necessary for effective and enjoyable in-basket performance. Later, students were admitted to administration courses which made extensive use of in-baskets and roleplaying only when they had experience equivalent to at least one internship block.

MJZ: What do you consider to be the most significant observations you have made about student responses to your simulated materials?

MG: I found that nearly all students had little if any previous experience with participative learning methods and none had experienced in-basket exercises. It was necessary to ease them into the use of in-baskets to minimize their fears. I found this could be accomplished by

first using in-basket items in discussions where the entire class participated in analysis, suggesting alternatives, and decision-making. The next stage was discussion of in-basket items by small groups of three or four students who then shared their analysis and actions with other groups for comparison and evaluation. Next, one or two in-basket items were assigned as homework. The students were to analyze each item thoroughly, suggest alternatives, decide on action(s), prepare out-basket letters, notes, etc., and write their rationale. Feedback included written comments and evaluation by the instructor, and class discussion of each in-basket item.

Once students became acquainted and comfortable with the in-basket format, they accepted it enthusiastically. Almost without exception they commented that they learned more with in-baskets than other methods because the relevance to media center administration was evident. That many students said they gained confidence in their ability to handle everyday activities and responsibilities because they had practiced them in in-basket exercises was a most gratifying response.

MJZ: Do you ever share with an entire class the out-basket responses that were prepared as an assignment?

MG: Yes, as I mentioned earlier, the debriefing that occurs during class discussion is a valuable part of the in-basket exercises. By comparing the actions of several individuals or groups to the same situation students learn that not all people act the same way, that there is generally more than one acceptable action, that messages often imply or lead to more than is obvious superficially, and that skills involved in handling everyday activities can be developed as we become aware of them. Since early in-basket exercises were class and small group efforts, the possible embarrassment of individuals by having their actions evaluated was minimized. I do not share with the class poor out-basket responses of individuals for that reason. However, I do keep copies of both effective and poor responses and find them useful as examples for discussion with subsequent classes.

MJZ: I believe you've also used in-basket messages as test items. Will you describe how you do that?

MG: Yes, after in-basket exercises are used as class and homework activities, they are used in testing situations which add two conditions not previously encountered by students. First, there is a time limit which is imposed on small group class exercises but not on homework exercises. Obviously, this time factor is very important in making the in-basket exercise relevant to on-the-job constraints. Second, interruptions are added to simulate normal working constraints. Prior to the test period, I decide on several typical interruptions, such as a teacher coming in to schedule a class or check out equipment, or a phone call. Various faculty members and students are asked to enter the testing room at specified times to carry out requested roles. During each interruption all students must cease working on their in-basket communications while one student, designated at that time by the instructor, handles the interruption. All students then return to their work.

Students are encouraged to bring texts and notes to class to use when they wish in preparing their responses. This also simulates the real environment where they will hopefully refer to professional resources as needed.

MJZ: How do you evaluate student responses?

MG: Evaluating student responses to in-basket exercises is troublesome, of course, since it is impossible to be truly objective, and even use of a thorough checklist for every out-basket response by every student is an overwhelming task. The method I used seemed satisfactory to the students and fit within my own time constraints. Scoring was accomplished by first quickly scanning all student responses. This helped me to reorient myself to the items and establish a standard which seemed reasonable. Then I would reread each student's responses and score each item. The score was basically 0-5, though up to two additional points were added for very effective responses or subtracted for poor responses. Comments were often written for individual items when such feedback seemed useful. Notes were also made at this time to assist me in leading class discussion during test debriefing. After all scoring was completed, totals were tabulated and recorded. Those nasty but inevitable letter grades were determined by observing the range of total scores and assigning grades with A indicating overall excellent and C acceptable performance. Less than acceptable performance was possible

and many students received widely disparate scores on items in the exercises. This method of grading in-basket performance seemed as meaningful as any that are used for essay exams. When I weighed the inherent weaknesses of in-basket evaluation against the probable validity as a prediction of on-the-job effectiveness, it seemed evident that grades based on in-basket performance are more justifiable than those based on papers or essays. Actually, final course grades were always based on several types of evaluation including projects, essay responses, numerous in-basket exercises and others.

MJZ: Overall, what proportion of your students show up less well in in-basket tests than in more traditional testing formats? What, if anything, do you do about it if you feel a given student could have achieved a higher grade in, say, an essay test?

MG: The valuable clue about probable student performance on-the-job is a primary factor convincing me to become an in-basket advocate. For instance, we all know that some people are natural students, that is, studying comes easy to them, and they develop skills in studying for objective tests, preparing research papers and essays, and pleasing the teacher. These students may or may not, however, be adapted to the human interacting, responsibilities and problems they will encounter on-the-job. Thus some straight A students may become poor professionals. Likewise, there are people who are poor students, sometimes very capable but perhaps bored by school routines and study. On-the-job they may be very well-liked, innovative, effective professionals. I found that in-basket exercises identified these important characteristics far better than any other method. Some students who always got A's did quite poorly on in-basket exercises and were surprised when needed improvements in important administrative skills were indicated. I always used such results as a basis for individual counseling during the course itself, and also during schedule advisement and intern supervision.

One of the most significant values of in-basket exercises is that it becomes possible even in one short course to more clearly illustrate not only important principles, but also their interrelationships and on-the-job applications for concepts such as media service, management,

personnel and human relations, leadership, decision-making, communication, and creativity. The in-basket items are easy to construct and flexible to use in that the same item or exercise may be used in class discussion, assignments, or testing, and may be grouped to illustrate a variety of specific concepts or skills. I found that student performance really did improve as they practiced analysis, identification of alternatives, and decision-making. I was very glad that I did not let my reservations about trying a new method and developing evaluation techniques delay use of in-baskets. Positive student reactions and progress were proof of their value as a teaching method.

THE DESIGN OF IN-BASKET MATERIALS

Martha Jane K. Zachert

If you visualize the design process as a flow chart, there will be ten steps from start to finish. Step 1, "State your objectives" is of prime importance. Typical appropriate objectives, stated here in generic terms, include:

To make a decision about (a given problem)

To seek factual information for decision-making about (a given problem)

To delegate, or assign (given work)

To initial communication(s) about (a variety of library messages for management, staff, and public)

To respond appropriately to (a variety of communications both in-house and extra-library)

To seek advice (from various parties in or out of the library)

To justify (any administrative request or professional recommendation)

These objectives may not always be stated as concretely as above at the introduction of the in-basket exercise; part of the exercise may be to have the learner deduce the meaning of an in-basket document and take whatever action is appropriate. The designer, however, must always have a clear understanding of exactly what response he is trying to elicit from the learner. The designer or teacher should always work from objectives stated in terms of what the learner should be able to do or what skills have been reinforced as a result of the experience gained in working the in-basket exercise. [1] (Note the examples in the exercises later in this Sourcebook.)

Step 2 is that of identifying the kinds of "real" situations related to or exemplifying the chosen objectives, and the kinds of "real" documents used in these situations. Learners who are having their initial

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[1] For help in learning to state educational objectives see Robert F. Mager, Preparing Instructional Objectives (2nd; Belmont, CA: Fearon Publishers, 1975.)

insight into library work and its problems need first to learn what is typical. They want, and need, specifics, but specifics from which they can generalize to many work situations. Thus, by "real" we mean "typical." Library science research, however, has not as yet focussed on field studies, so we have little or no basis for knowing whether an observed situation is typical or unusual or, even, unique. Pending such research, the ability to carry out this step of the design process successfully calls for considerable experience on the part of the designer.

Step 3 is "Determine the type of in-basket that will best meet the objectives." Is the situation an interactive one? Does work on the specific problem require immediate feedback and discussion? Is this exercise to introduce a problem or procedure, to apply theoretical knowledge, to provide reinforcement of skill training, to test? Answers to these questions will help you decide whether you need to design a single in-basket document, a sequential flow of messages, or a moment-in-time exercise, as well as whether the material is to be used in class or as an assignment between classes.

Now that you have objectives, situations and documents in mind and you know how you plan to use the material, it is time for Step 4. "Sketch out the whole piece of material and critique it." As soon as you have used one in-basket document with a class you have acquired some experience which will help you critique new material. The more you work with the method, the better you will be able to critique new material. It is often helpful, also, to obtain peer help at this point. Another knowledgeable person will be able, on reading your material, to offer helpful suggestions. Step 5, after the critique, will be "Revise," both situations and documents as needed.

Step 6 is "Flesh out the sketch of the material." Complete all documents. Provide a statement of the situational context for the learner, as well as clarifying his place in it. Add whatever supplementary information is needed: perhaps an organization chart, a calendar, a personnel roster. Step 7 calls for a "Peer evaluation" of the now complete package; Step 8 is, again, "Revise."

Step 9 is "Use with a class and gather feedback." Note whatever may crop up about the exercise that causes learners unplanned confusion. You may well have planned some confusion (such as a conflict in dates) to help learners identify likely sources of similar problems. Confusion or conflict that ultimately helps attain objectives is desirable, but unplanned confusion results in diminution of learning and needs to be revised out of the exercise. It is wise to collect specific feedback in addition to your own observation. Learners should be asked to comment both on the content of the exercise and its effect on them. It is also wise to collect such information from more than one class or more than one use of the material. Eventually you are ready for Step 10, "Final revision." Final until the problem disappears from libraries or until students fail to learn from it. Then you begin again at Step 1.

Zoll, in his suggestions on "Creating An In-Basket Exercise," points out that to help a learner "stretch" and learn about a position higher than the one he now occupies it may be necessary to simulate an emergency situation.[2] "Someone resigns, leaves suddenly or receives immediate promotion," you say to the learner, "and you must take over." The timing must be such that the usual support personnel (secretaries, administrative assistants) are not available. The learner must be on his own in the situation. This is good advice for material designed for in-service or for continuing education use (which is Zoll's focus). With master's level students I have found that they like to picture themselves doing professional work, and they have no difficulty responding to the simple direction "Act as you think you would act in this situation." I get rid of the support personnel by having the librarian at work overtime. This device seems to me to add to the overall reality!

For beginning students my work indicates that an exercise which contains a single emergency or a single hard decision is preferable to one which includes many tough problems. The profile of such an exercise would be as follows: a total of 6-8 messages, 2-4 of which are routine (and need only to be filed, bucked, or turned over to the secretary with a note from which a full reply can be formulated), one message contains the emergency or

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[2] Allen A. Zoll, Dynamic Management Education (2d ed; Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969), 135-136.

problem which is the real point of the exercise (and of the follow-up discussion), one distractor (to make sure such messages can be identified and properly handled or ignored) and the rest is padding. You might try analyzing the sample exercises in this Sourcebook from this point of view; you will quickly see what I mean.

Personal names in documents lend realism, but you must remember that the learner who is in the librarian's chair may be male or female. In formal documents, you can use the name of the position instead of that of a person. There are bound to be some informal documents in an exercise, however, and for those you need to refer to the central character by name. In time you can come up with your own list of "unisex" names. For starters, here are some of mine: Bobbie, Dale, Dana, Gail, Gerry, Lani, Les, Lynn, Neil, Van.

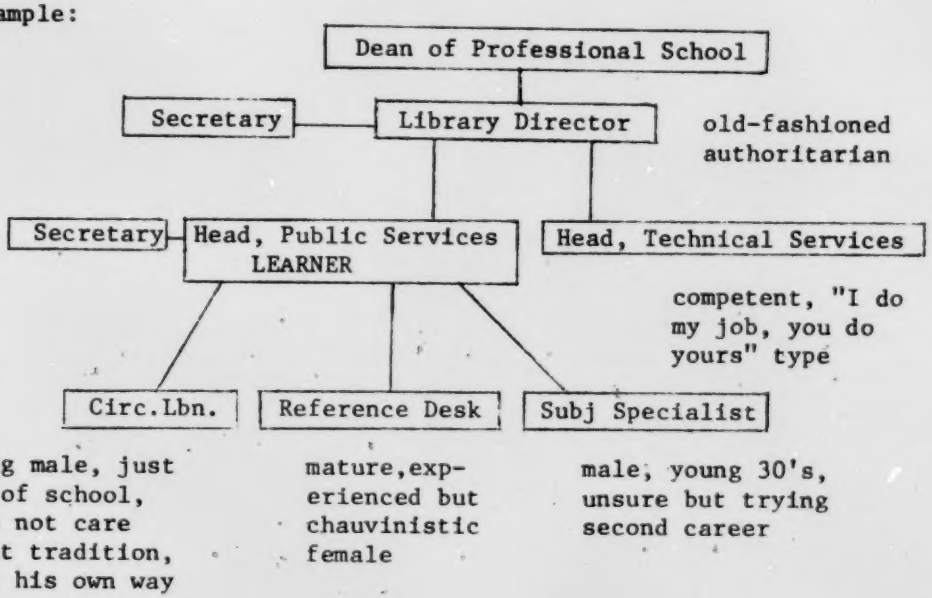
In creating exercises for use with experienced librarians, a bit of added pressure can lend both realism and sophistication. One frequently used device is that of time pressure. Build into the situation the necessity to handle this paperwork in a hurry ("You're leaving for an out-of-town meeting in thirty minutes;" "You're between meetings on a very busy day.") You can include more documents than you allow time for in working the exercise, so that some items are necessarily left undone. You can include related items, unidentified as such in a large packet of messages. You can include overdue messages without identifying them except by their dates. You can provide a "crisis interruption" while the learners are working on their exercises, something that will not only distract them, but that has significance in relation to a document in the exercise and that will change their priorities for completing the exercise. You can plan internal inconsistencies, such as conflicting orders from above.

Dating the exercise as of the date of the class session when it will be used adds to the realism, but sets you up for constant revision if you plan to use the material repeatedly. I use 197x to avoid the dilemma. Actual letterheads and company forms also lend realism, but it is certainly possible to get along without them. It is important to use different signatures and different handwriting for the various senders

of different messages. One's colleagues are usually willing to help out in this regard.

The designer needs a clear picture of the organization being simulated and must often create personalities for at least some of the workers in order to create realistic messages. Zoll suggests that the beginning designer will find it helpful to sketch out the chart, placing the learner in relation to others in the organization and adding some personality notes. [3]

For example:



Finally, if policies or procedures of the library will be needed by the learner in making decisions, these also must be hypothesized and provided.

Good luck!

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[3] Ibid., p. 138.

IN BASKET EXERCISES: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

Veronica S. Pantelidis*

Carlton, Sydell T., and Brault, Margueritte B.
In-Basket Scoring Manual. Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1971. 74p.
Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 059 275

Provides a detailed explanation on the use of 58 scoring categories for evaluating performance on an in-basket exercise for management trainees.

Engle, Herbert M.
Handbook of Creative Learning Exercises. Houston: Gulf Publishing Co., 1973. 276 p.

Includes a chapter on the development of in-basket materials and presents two in-basket exercises: "The Branch Manager In-Basket" and "The Psychologist as Administrator" in-basket.

Gibson, George.
"A New Dimension for 'In-Basket' Training." Personnel 38 (July-August 1961): 76-79.

Describes an in-basket simulation which combined regular in-basket items with video-taped situations, used in a course in personnel administration at Harvard Business School.

Immegart, Glenn L., and Brant, Daniel.
"Sister Monica's In-Basket." Catholic School Journal 68 (May 1968): 34-38.

Describes an in-basket exercise which uses various media including tape-recorded and written problem episodes; designed for training elementary school principals.

*Veronica S. Pantelidis, Ph.D., is Associate Professor, Department of Library Science, East Carolina University.

Jaffee, Cabot L.
Problems in Supervision: An In-Basket Training Exercise. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1968. 235 p.

Contains two in-basket exercises, with instructor's guide, discussion questions, student questions, and tests; intended for managers and supervisors.

Lopez, Felix M. Jr.
Evaluating Executive Decision Making: The In-Basket Technique. Research Study No. 75. New York: American Management Association, 1966. 159 p.

Includes chapters on in-basket research, design, administration, performance, application to training, and use in assessment, and describes a number of in-baskets in use.

Zachert, Martha Jane K.
Simulation Teaching of Library Administration. New York: Bowker, 1975. 297 p.

Includes a chapter on the use, value and limitations of the in-basket exercise, as well as a sample in-basket exercise for use with library science students studying special library administration.

Zachert, Martha Jane K., and Pantelidis, Veronica.
SIBE: A Sequential In-Basket Technique, the Pilot Study. Tallahassee: Computer Assisted Instruction Center, Florida State University, 1971. 153 p. Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Reproduction Service, ED 056 469

Describes an in-basket program using computer-assisted instruction; designed to provide library science students with decision making experience in administration.

Zoll, Allen A.
Dynamic Management Education. 2nd ed. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969. 502 p.

Includes information on selection, creation, and use of in-basket exercises, and provides examples.

HELP FOR MEMO WRITERS: A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Martha Jane K. Zachert

Ewing, Daird W. Writing for Results in Business, Government and the Professions. Wiley, 1974.

Poe, Roy W. and Rosemary T. Fruehling. Business Communication: A Problem-Solving Approach. McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Reid, James M. and Robert M. Wendlinger. Effective Letters: A Program for Self-Instruction. 2d ed. McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Uris, Auren. Memos for Managers. Crowell, 1975.

U.S. Air. Force. Guide for Air Force Writing. GPO, 1969. (AF Pamphlet 10-1)

U.S. General Services Administration. Guide Letters. GPO, 1955.

U.S. General Services Administration. Plain Letters. GPO, 1955.

U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Getting Your Ideas Across Through Writing. Training Manual No. 7. GPO, 1950.

U.S. Department of the Interior. Gobbledygook has Gotta Go. GPO, 1966.

DEMONSTRATION IN-BASKET MATERIALS

In presenting these materials here we have placed two or more communications on the same page wherever possible to conserve space. In using an exercise with a class, each communication should be presented on a separate sheet of paper for ease in prioritizing and to provide space for noting action or composing an out-basket communication.

-Editor

"BACK ON THE JOB..."

A SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER ADMINISTRATION IN-BASKET EXERCISE

by JUDITH F. DAVIE*

JANICE C. FENNELL**

OBJECTIVES:

1. To gain experience in establishing priorities in the decision-making activities relative to school media center administration;
2. To gain experience in responding to in-basket communications;
3. To stimulate discussion of decision making by the school media specialist.

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*Judith F. Davie is a doctoral candidate, School of Library Science, Florida State University.

**Janice C. Fennell is a doctoral candidate, School of Library Science, Florida State University

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This exercise may be a new type of activity for you. In an in-basket exercise, you will be working with materials that are comparable to the type of communications that might be on your desk in the school media center.

2. Attached is a packet of descriptive information and in-basket communications.

3. Read the situational context first, then the communications.

4. Arrange the memos in the order of priority and number them consecutively.

5. Decide on the appropriate action and response for each memo.

6. A calendar is attached to aid your planning.

7. In the debriefing period, be prepared to discuss the priorities that you have established and the actions that you have taken.

8. Remember you are the school media specialist responding to all items.

THE SITUATION:

You are Lee Sims, School Media Specialist at Highland Elementary School. This year, the school's enrollment has increased to 800 students which enabled a second professional librarian to be hired. Leslie Adams, a recent library school graduate, has been hired for that position.

It is Monday, September 12, the beginning of the third week of school. Last week you were absent Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, because of a family illness. Paula North, a retired school media specialist, was the substitute. Sybil, your clerk-typist for the last three years, has carefully accumulated various memos that arrived during your absence.

Attention must be given to the memos. In making your decisions, be cognizant of what <u>your</u> reactions would be in an actual school media center environment.

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

28

COMMUNICATION A

Lee,

I really enjoyed working for you. It was good to get back in a lively Media Center. You are so well organized for the beginning of a school year. There were no problems! Call me again when you need someone.

Paula North
9-9-77

COMMUNICATION B

I have a dental appointment and need to leave at 12:00 Monday.

Sybil

COMMUNICATION C

Interschool Memo

From the Desk of:

Jerry Kirby

TO: Lee

RE: We're ready to begin the unit on Florida History on Tuesday, September 13. We'll be in Tuesday for your usual introductory lesson on what is available on Florida. Did the County Media Center buy the Florida film that we previewed last year? I'll check with you Monday after school.

Jerry

COMMUNICATION D

Friday P.M.

Lee: The Kodak representative will be at Highland Monday at 1:30 to demonstrate the Ektagraphic equipment.

Sybil

COMMUNICATION E

Friday A.M.

Phone Call from Madeline Moore, District Media Supervisor

Emergency meeting of County Intellectual Freedom Committee at 1:00 Monday in the County Superintendent's Office concerning the book "Show Me."

Sybil

COMMUNICATION F

Friday

Lee—

The teachers continue to go to Sybil for scheduling and planning the storytelling periods. I thought I was in charge of the library activities for grades K-2. Sybil seems to be doing everything and doesn't know I am here. She even decided on the books for me to use.

Leslie

COMMUNICATION G

Interschool Memo

From the Desk of:

Alicia Richardson
Principal
September 8

TO: School Media Specialists

RE: Increased Funding

With the increased enrollment at Highland, this year, we are receiving more funds for library materials. Add $250 to your materials budget. However, the orders must be ready and sent to the County Office by Oct. 3. I'll be out of town September 28-30 so will need to sign the requisitions before I go. Get them in before then.

I didn't know what to do since we have such a short time. I looked at some catalogs but didn't do anything since you warned me about overstepping my duties. We do need filmstrips.

Leslie

COMMUNICATION H

Thursday A.M.

Lee:

Mrs. Wolf called Thursday morning complaining that her first grader could not check out library books until January. Her child in Mrs. Elliott's room can print her name and checks books out of the public library all the time. She said as long as her daughter cannot check out books, she will not serve as chairman of the volunteer parents for the media center and will not volunteer. Her phone number is 784-5903.

Sigurd

She is the mother who helped us interfile catalog cards last year

COMMUNICATION J

567 Pine Street
Baytown, Florida
September 6, 1977

M. Lee Sims
School Media Specialist
Highland Elementary School
Baytown, Florida

Dear M. Sims:

The Highland PTA would like to conduct a book fair this fall to raise money for the Media Center. We understand that this activity has been profitable for other schools in the district. Now we need help from you as to what to do, when, and where.

Could you please address the PTA meeting on Tuesday, September 13, about book fairs and your experiences with them? We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Vera Cox

Vera Cox, President
Highland PTA

"MONDAY MORNING BEDLAM IN THE SCIENCE LIBRARY"

An In-Basket Exercise

by JANICE C. FENNELL*
JUDITH F. DAVIE**

OBJECTIVES:

1. To enable the participant to see the variety of problems facing an administrator at one time;
2. To assist the participant in setting priorities;
3. To assist the participant in replying to various forms of communications.

THE SITUATION:

You are Dr. Orlyn Jenkins, the Head of the Science Library in a large university. Five professionals are on the staff and ten non-professionals. It is Monday morning, February 22, 10:30 a.m. You have just returned to your office from a meeting with the Chemistry Department faculty. You are to attend a 12:30 luncheon and conduct a workshop on human relations this afternoon and tomorrow morning as part of the metropolitan area public services librarians' meeting. You anticipate being back in your office after lunch tomorrow. You find the following letters, messages, and memos on your desk.

*Janice C. Fennell is a doctoral candidate, School of Library Science, Florida State University.

**Judith F. Davie is a doctoral candidate, School of Library Science, Florida State University.

"MONDAY MORNING BEDLAM IN THE SCIENCE LIBRARY"

An In-Basket Exercise

Instructions:

1. Enclosed is a packet containing a description of the organization in which you work, the situation in which you find yourself, and ten pieces of correspondence which need action.

2. Please read the situation, problem, and all items of communication in the packet.

3. Arrange the items in the order in which you think they should be handled. Number them consecutively. In making your decisions, you are to act as you think you would act under the circumstances. Think about your rationale for each action.

4. The actions upon which you decide may be in the form of memos, telephone calls, drafts of formal letters, or other normal business communications.

5. A calendar is attached to aid in your planning.

6. You are the Head Librarian of the Science Library responding to all items.

7. In the debriefing and discussion period, be prepared to give your reasons for the priorities which were assigned by you.

CALENDAR:

FEBRUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

COMMUNICATION A

INTEROFFICE MEMO

to: Dr. Jenkins February 22

from: Merle, Circulation Librarian 10:00 a.m.

A student called about an hour ago and said that he had received a bill for $30.00. He knows that he returned the book and wants to talk with the head "honcho." He will not accept my word as final. He does not have any books checked out, this charge is for past overdue books plus processing charges. Enclosed is a copy of the bill and his name and phone number. Good luck!

Attachment:

Mr. Joe Bowers
Manzell Dorm
Campus

Description of Material	Due	Returned	Amount
HQ 736/H745	12/15	2/8	$7.50
LB 1045/B13	11/3	2/8	9.25
LB 1045/C5	11/3	2/8	9.25
PROCESSING FEE			4.00
		TOTAL	30.00

His phone # is 8-14-1111

merle

COMMUNICATION B

INTEROFFICE MEMO

TO: Orlyn

February 21
Time: 5:00 p.m.

From: Fran, Reference Librarian FR

I'll be off this Monday from working the weekend, so thought you ought to know about this. There was a bad scene in the stacks. A man exposed himself to one of the student assistants. This has happened previously and we (all of the staff) have not been given directions as to what to do. Please call a meeting of the staff and inform everyone as to what to do when and if this happens again.

COMMUNICATION C

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

To: Orlyn Jenkins

February 19

From: Walt Gleason, Professor WG

Your flyer on assistance in the research course just arrived this afternoon. That's a great idea. I know this is short notice but would it be possible for you to participate in the research seminar on Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. My grad students need to be shown the micromaterials and equipment. Also the indexes and abstracts need to be reviewed along with proper citation style. Thanks.

COMMUNICATION D

A B C SOFT DRINK COMPANY
100 Macon Street Atlanta, Georgia

February 18, 197X

Dr. Carroll Ruskins
Director of Libraries
University
Akron, Georgia

Dear Carroll:

In regards to our recent conversation, Mrs. Grace Meadows, our librarian, and I will be there Tuesday morning around 9:30 to check the special materials in the Science Library which you thought would be relevant to our current research. We will need help with the location not only of the materials but of the indexes which might lead us one step further. We will, in all probability, want to check out a number of materials and also make copies of much of the information. In addition to those services, we want to take advantage of the online search service which you have suggested.

It was so good seeing you at the Area Chember meeting the other evening. We must make it a point to get together soon. Perhaps you can join Grace and me for lunch on Tuesday.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Bill

William Needles
Research Coordinator

...n your ...ndle. then ... have a ... meeting with the V. P. Thanks— Carroll

COMMUNICATION E

INTEROFFICE MEMO

to: Dr. Jenkins Friday, Feb. 19

from: Merle, Circulation Librarian Merle

That same group of graduate students is at it again. You know what I mean--smoking in the conference room. They have been reminded about it. In fact, I've tried all approaches-signs, removal of ashtrays and trashcans, reminders posted around the room, notes in mail boxes, and personal conferences--They are always courteous and agreeable, but seem to forget my reminders. What can we do?

COMMUNICATION F

INTEROFFICE MEMO

to: Dr. Jenkins Monday 9:00 a.m.

from: Madge, Serials Librarian

NO STUDENTS SHOWED UP THIS MORNING....DOES CIRCULATION OR REFERENCE HAVE ANY EXTRAS? HOW ABOUT SOME OF THE NON-PROFESSIONALS? MONDAYS ARE OUR BIG MAIL DAY AND I AM DESPERATE!

Please help me!
Madge.

COMMUNICATION G

INTEROFFICE MEMO

to: Boss

from: Diane, Secretary D

The janitor asked me again about those old newspapers we're getting rid of. He is moving soon and needs them for packing.

COMMUNICATION H

Date: Monday, Feb. 22

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Message:

Dan, a reporter from the campus newsletter, wants to do an article on the new online reference search capabilities for next month's newsletter. He wants to interview you sometime this week. Needs to arrange his schedule for the week.

Diane

COMMUNICATION J

DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY MEMORANDUM Friday, Feb. 19

TO: Orlyn Jenkins, Head Science Librarian

FROM: Dr. Roscoe, Head of Geology Department

SUBJECT: Display for state meeting.

A week from this coming Thursday, the University Department of Geology will be serving as hosts at the State Geology Association. You have been generous with space for exhibits for our department in the past. We have run out of exhibit space; therefore, would it be possible for us to use the library lobby for some additional exhibits. Those special cases you have are perfect for the exhibits which I will put over there. Thanks.

Bon—
I checked the exhibit schedule and Home Ec is to put their display up March 1, only 3 days before Dr. Roscoe needs space. Rumor has it that the Home Ec Dept. and Geology are at it again—fighting about space and funds

Diane

COMMUNICATION K

MEMORANDUM

University Libraries
Office of the Director
Friday, February 19

TO: Orlyn

FROM: Carroll CR

SUBJECT: Continuing Education for LTA's

This afternoon three of your LTA's met with me regarding their need for some additional training--either on the job, in-service programs, or formal courses to be taken in library science or in one of the sciences.

What do you think you might be able to do about this? Promises and vague plans won't work with this group. (They're very involved in the union, you know) They want action! Please develop some specific training options at your earliest convenience. We'll then meet and get some programs started. Perhaps we can use them in the main library and at all of the branch libraries.

"Clearing the Desk"

A School Media Specialist's In-Basket Exercise

by Marilyn Garrett*

Objectives:

1. To involve students in an interesting, enjoyable, participative form of learning;

2. To increase motivation for learning and probability of behavior change more effectively than lecture, textbook, and term paper methods;

3. To obtain samples of student behavior in circumstances similar to those possible on-the-job, so that evaluation of student performance would be more nearly related to professional potential;

4. To illustrate effectively and efficiently the nature of and interdependence of concepts of media service, management, personnel and human relations, leadership, problem solving, decision making, communication, and creativity;

5. To enable students to gain awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, and gain confidence in their own ability as a media administrator.

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*Marilyn Garrett is a doctoral candidate, College of Education, Florida State University. This material was prepared and used with classes at the College of Education, Florida Technological University.

IN-BASKET EXERCISE

The Situation

Assume that you are employed as the Head Media Specialist at a public high school in Orlando which has a typical curriculum. There are 92 teachers and administrators, and 1800 students in grades 10-12. Almost 35% of the students are from a poor neighborhood and are relatively unmotivated to school and studying.

This is your second year in this position. Your staff includes one other media specialist, LEE SMITH, who is new this year; PAT WEST, a clerk who has worked in the Media Center for three years; MARY GRANT, a half-time aide from the CETA Program, and twenty students who receive 1/4 service credit each semester.

The Principal, FRANK SHOWALTER, was not very familiar with media services but has been very responsive and supportive of your ideas whenever the budget would permit. The faculty is organized by departments and some are more responsive than others to your effort.

At the end of a busy day you usually take time to clear the items in your in-basket before going home.

What you are to do

The items in your in-basket packet are typical of those you may handle on-the-job and draw on many concepts in media service and administration. You will have 60 minutes to complete this activity. Go through the entire packet, determine priorities, and take whatever action you feel is appropriate for each item. Write letters, memos and/or notes to yourself; jot down things to be done or considered; delegate or route tasks; even throw away items--just as you would on-the-job.

From time to time the class will be interrupted by a phone call or someone entering the room with a request for assistance. During each interruption all participants are to stop working. One person will be delegated by the instructor to handle the interruption after which all participants may return to their in-basket items.

You are provided with several types of letterhead, memorandum, and note forms. Paperclip your actions to each in-basket item and return all materials to your folder when you are finished.

You may refer to your class or reading notes, and to any books or other materials which have been brought to class. Referring to such resources is also typical of on-the-job administration.

Have a good day Media Specialist!

COMMUNICATION A

ORLANDO CENTRAL SCHOOL
MEMORANDUM

Thursday a.m.

TO: M.S.

FROM: Harvey Mood

My 8th grade science class is going to begin a unit on famous American scientists next week. Do you have anything that can help us out? What arrangements can I make to use materials you have?

COMMUNICATION B

SUN DISTRICT SCHOOL SYSTEM

MEMORANDUM

TO: School Media Specialists

FROM: Media Supervisor

RE: Video demonstration

A representative from the Sony Company will be at the district media center to demonstrate and discuss video equipment and techniques two weeks from Thursday, March 15, at 2:30 p.m. If three people from your school would care to come they are welcome. Please R.S.V.P. by March 13.

COMMUNICATION C

ORLANDO CENTRAL SCHOOL

MEMORANDUM

TO: M.S. Thursday p.m.

FROM: Rosa Lee Rosewater

I need more library passes + soon!

Thanks—

Rosa

Communication D

notes from NEWCOMB

Our American history class was really turned on by Roots. We'd like to do a unit on it and I wish we had a copy for everyone to read. I'm aware that the books cost more than $10 each, so there's no way we can buy enough copies with school funds. How many copies do you have in the Media Center? Do you know of any way we can get hold of a lot of copies for our unit? I sure would appreciate your suggestions!

Rex

Communication E

The student assistants who work at the circulation desk are apparently making such a mess of the filing that cards cannot be located when books are returned—and some books get shelved with the wrong card in the pocket. Somehow this needs to be corrected immediately because students are very angry about getting notices by mistake.

Pat W.

Communication F

Thanks for all your help last week during our visit on American artists!! You media folks are great!

J. Rubin

Communication G

SUN DISTRICT SCHOOL SYSTEM

MEMORANDUM

TO: School Media Specialists

FROM: Media Supervisor

RE: Data requested by Superintendent

The attached copy of a memorandum from the Superintendent indicates the information desired by Board member L. Franklin. I realize that you probably do not have such information readily at hand, but I would appreciate it if you could do your best to gather the data, and forward a report to me at the end of two weeks. I appreciate your extra effort in carrying out this request. We will discuss the results of the data gathering and the implications of the request at our next media meeting.

Communication G -- Attachment

SUN DISTRICT SCHOOL SYSTEM

MEMORANDUM

TO: B. Good, Media Supervisor

FROM: Superintendent Right

RE: Media Center Data

At the last Board meeting, member L. Franklin inquired whether information is available for each of our media centers which indicates how many students use the various sets of encyclopedias for homework assignments. He is concerned that we may be purchasing sets that are not being used for one reason or another, and that instead of purchasing those sets the money could be better spent buying other materials. He would like this information as soon as possible, and of course, I'd like to have it available for the next Board meeting which is three weeks from now. Please provide some response to this inquiry by that time.

Communication H

SUN DISTRICT SCHOOL SYSTEM

MEMORANDUM

To: School Media Specialist

From: Pupil Services

Re: Student rights materials

As you know, new District guidelines relating to student rights have been established in response to Supreme Court decisions. A copy of these guidelines is attached along with a copy of the handbook being distributed to each student. Please keep these items on file in the Media Center.

Communication I

While you were talking with Principal Showalter after school, several students asked for 3 sheets of poster board and wanted to use the poster paints to make signs for the Morale Club. I put them off until tomorrow. Do we have a policy about that? They were very courteous and said they couldn't get it anywhere else.

Lee

NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS (Not to be distributed to students)

Ten items are included in this sample in-basket exercise. Responses to each item may relate to concepts, skills, or decisions such as those suggested below.

Item A: Does student recognize need for additional information about assignment, locate resources at hand, determine additional resource needs, set up efficient arrangements for resource utilization, schedule and carry out communication with teachers and media staff efficiently while being friendly and informative, delegate duties, exhibit leadership and creativity in locating additional sources of materials and suggesting interesting and appropriate activities relating to the unit....?

Item B: Does student involve teachers and media staff, delegate responsibility and opportunity, communicate effectively, and exhibit leadership and creativity by requesting additional representation if space becomes available, by inviting administrators or PTA representatives who may make funds available....?

Item C: Does student recognize need for standard management routines and delegation of duties and simply route this item to staff member....?

Item D: What are student's notions of collection development, role of media program in support of curriculum, involvement of other media sources? Is student's communication with teacher likely to result in positive feelings about media services? Does student exhibit leadership and creativity by suggesting alternative materials, activities, and human resources....?

Item E: Does student recognize importance of the problem to effective media service, accept leadership and responsibility and act positively to solve the problem, exhibit management skills in relation to media organization procedures, and communicate with sensitivity to human relations....?

Item F: Does student share good news with staff and use opportunity to build staff morale....?

Item G: Does student explore implications of this request, involve staff, teachers, and principal in discussing the problem and data-gathering procedures, seek clarification, e.g. "homework assignment," establish feasible data-gathering procedures....?

Item H: Does student question whether teachers have access to these guidelines and arrange access if they don't, perhaps seek additional copies, recognize value of adding other media for teachers and students about this topic, capitalize on high current interest by displaying materials on student and human rights and similar topics, route handbook to staff member to establish or add to file....?

Item I: Does student describe present or needed policy, respond to student request with sensitivity, suggest other sources of the materials if not the media center....?

"Pinch-Hitter"

A Special Library Management In-Basket Exercise

By John J. Miniter*

Objectives

1. To permit the student practical exercise in a class unit previously covered theoretically;

2. To offer the student practical experience in several real-life management situations in a short period of time;

3. To afford the student experience in decision-making and in prioritizing actions.

The Situation:

You are a special librarian who, until last week, worked in the Systems Division of the Consolidated Spring Company. The Betsy Ross Division of Consolidated Spring is located about twenty miles away from your ordinary place of work, the Systems Library.

Last week the Librarian of the Betsy Ross Division quite unexplainably resigned one morning and left that afternoon. There are other staff members in the Division Library, but because of current pressing demands on the Betsy Ross Division personnel during closure on a large and potentially lucrative contract negotiation, you have been asked to "fill in" as Librarian during this exceptionally busy period. While you aren't intimately acquainted with the work of the Betsy Ross Division Library, you are nevertheless well aware of the objectives of the Company and might, therefore, be expected to work effectively with a minimum of supervision at the Betsy Ross Library.

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*John J. Miniter, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor, School of Library Science, Texas Woman's University.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. You are the librarian in the situation described below. You have been given a packet of memoranda which constitute the morning mail found in your in-basket.

2. Read each of the memos in the packet.

3. Arrange and number the memos in the priority order you feel is appropriate.

4. Reply to each of the memos on the verso of the memo. Your written reply should constitute an effective answer; that is, you shouldn't evade by replying, "Your memo suggests an interesting problem. Let's discuss it over lunch next week."

5. You may choose not to reply to a memo. In this case, you should give your reason for not replying.

COMMUNICATION A

MEMORANDUM

TO: Librarian

FROM: Assistant to the Director of Research

DATE: Monday, 25 June 1978

The Director of Research, your superior and mine, has asked me to work with you on one area of your operation that appears to be too costly in terms of personnel time. I refer to the binding operation that you mention in your reports. We note that it requires twelve hours of personnel time each month to deal with the binding in addition to the costs of the binding itself.

Please examine your methods and be prepared to offer us better ways of dealing with this recurring operation. It appears to us that you could use standardized procedures of contract with the binder to do the work your personnel now does.

When you are ready, say, next Tuesday, let's talk about it. Please bring with you a flow chart of your present operation.

COMMUNICATION B

MEMORANDUM

TO: Whom It May Concern

FROM: Bessie Cindern

DATE: 26 June 1978

I want to submit my resignation from my job in this library.

I like my job here a lot and the men are friendly and some of them are cute. However, I have only been here six months and my supervisor has left and now I'm going to get a new boss. Besides, the company has just been sold. I don't like all this change and I'm going to get out and find a new job.

Bessie Cindern
(Miss) Bessie Cindern

(Bessie came to Consolidated from a position with the Valley National Bank where her record was good. She is slow but thorough. She is 36 and not likely to marry.)

COMMUNICATION C

Monday, 25 June 1978

Library Supervisor:

I have been working at Betsy Ross for two years. I have done a fairly good job of learning my responsibilities in the two positions I occupied during my first year or so. However, I have been troubled lately with my present position which I have occupied for the past ten months.

In my first position I could see its place in the overall operation of this library. I saw the value of the tasks even though I feel that they were too simple.

With this job I am now doing I can't gain any sense of accomplishment. There doesn't seem to be much reason for what I am doing. Just how does this job contribute to the work of the library and to our clientele?

Ann

COMMUNICATION D

Monday, 25 June 1978

TO: Librarian

FROM: Bob Washington, Wage & Salary Committee BW

Our records show that there is one clerical position in the library that is classified as a Labor Grade #5 position.

There are a number of other Labor Grade #5 jobs around the plant and, in the interest of efficiency, we are planning to construct one job description to fit all Labor Grade #5 jobs.

We assume that you are agreeable to this change which will make our work a bit easier. If we do not hear from you further we will send you copies of the new job description within four weeks. They will take effect one week from today.

COMMUNICATION E

Tuesday

TO: Library

FROM: David Phelps

As you can see from my mail station address, I have my desk in Building #403 and I don't seem to be able to get over to the library very often.

Would you please order a subscription to the Wall Street Journal for me and have it sent to my address, Mail Station #65, Building #403.

COMMUNICATION F

Tuesday, 26 June 1978

TO: Librarian

FROM: Accounting

Accounting of your fiscal funds at the close of the last quarter reveals that the library has exceeded its budget for the quarter by seven hundred dollars.

Ordinary procedure in cases like this is to cancel outstanding orders to that amount. Kindly let us know which ones you wish us to cancel.

Please reply at your early convenience.

James Wilding

James Wilding
Chief Accountant

COMMUNICATION G

TO: Library Supervisor

FROM: Al Sloan, Personnel Planning

DATE: Tuesday, 26 June 1978

SUBJECT: Table of Organization and Staffing

As you are aware, Betsy Ross has now completed its merger with Consolidated Spring. It is possible that management will decide to consolidate and even curtail certain operations or projects at this location. Thus we must be alive to the possibility of a reduction in force here at Betsy Ross. Among the units that might possibly be affected is the library.

At the present, our records reveal that you have one Chief Librarian (L.G.#21), one Assistant Professional Librarian (L.G.#19), one Chief Clerk (L.G.#15) and two clerks (L.G.#12).

Please give me in writing today your ideas on how we might effectuate a 20-30% reduction in library personnel should it ever become necessary to do so.

COMMUNICATION H

Tuesday, 26 June 1978

Dear Boss:

You will recall that you hired me one year ago at the salary of $9,200 per year. So far I have received an increase of three hundred and fifty dollars. You told me that this raise was a merit increase, as I recall.

Judy, who has the same educational record as I have was hired last week at $9,500 per year. Since she has no experience at all and doesn't know this organization or even her job as well as I do mine, I wonder about the merit of it all.

I keep wondering if one year's experience in this library is worth just fifty dollars.

Bemused Cathy

Cathy

COMMUNICATION J

Tuesday, 26 June 1978

Dear Leslie:

You may have heard that the secretaries along Mahogany Row have formed an informal circle and that we meet for lunch every Friday. We chose Friday since it seems to hasten the weekend.

We would like to have you join us for lunch this Friday, if you are free. We'll meet at 12:15 at the Wish Bone. Let us know by Thursday if you can come since we usually make reservations.

Sincerely
Laverne Thompson
Laverne Thompson

COMMUNICATION K

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Addressees of Distribution "B"

FROM: Mailroom Supervisor

DATE: 26 June 1978

SUBJECT: Mail

We are experiencing a considerable increase in the amount of incoming mail, and, consequently, in our distribution workload.

You could assist us measurably if you would have all mail possible addressed to your homes. For that mail which must continue to be addressed here, it would be of considerable assistance if you would inform your addressees of your proper mail station at this facility.

THE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

OF

LANADALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

AN IN-BASKET EXERCISE

By Veronica S. Pantelidis*

*Veronica S. Pantelidis, Ph.D., is Associate Professor, Department of Library Science, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina.

The Learning Resource Center of Lanadale Community College

An In-Basket Exercise

The Situation:

You are the director of the Learning Resource Center of Lanadale Community College. You have just returned to your office on Tuesday morning, October 15, after attendance at a professional meeting out of town, October 11 through 14.

Your Assignment:

In your in-basket you find the attached 12 items. It is your task to take appropriate action on each item by:

1. Deciding the priority for the item and indicating this numerically in the space provided on the "Sequence of Action" list.

2. Indicating the action you would take in the space provided under each item.

3. Writing a letter or memo, if required, and attaching it to the appropriate item-sheet.

A calendar has been provided to assist you. You may mark on it any way you choose.

Sequence of Action

Item	Priority	Item	Priority
1	___	7	___
2	___	8	___
3	___	9	___
4	___	10	___
5	___	11	___
6	___	12	___

CALENDAR

October 19xx

monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18

COMMUNICATION A

To Pat

Date Oct 14 Time 11:05

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

M. Jan Jay

of History Dept

Phone 7392

Area Code Number Extension

TELEPHONED	✓	PLEASE CALL	✓
CALLED TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		URGENT	
RETURNED YOUR CALL			

Message Wants to talk to you about problems his students are having finding materials for their local history survey. He claims we check out too many books to non-cc people and even if this students need it out.

Operator

EFFICIENCY® LINE No. 5725 AN AMPAD PRODUCT 50 SHEETS

COMMUNICATION B

LANADALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Memo

Date: October 11, 19xx

To: All Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

From: Office of the President

Subject: Policy Consistency

Please provide this office with copies of all written policies by Friday, October 18, so that they can be examined for consistency with Lanadale Community College policy. If you have any questions, please call this office immediately. Thank you.

COMMUNICATION C

DATE Oct. 11

TO: Pat

FROM: Sharon, Circulation

I checked out The History of Lanadale to my cousin for her mother who is bedridden and needs something to read. I couldn't find any written policy on circulation to 3rd parties. I hope it's ok.

Sharon

COMMUNICATION D

To Pat

Date Oct 11 Time 9:15

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

M your dentist - Dr C

of

Phone

Area Code	Number	Extension

TELEPHONED	✓	PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		URGENT	
RETURNED YOUR CALL			

Message Cancelled your appointment for Saturday Oct 19. Only time they can see you for this month is 9 AM Wed Oct 16. That's our staff meeting time but I doubt that we have anything important to discuss so I said OK for you.

Operator

EFFICIENCY® LINE No. 5725 AN AMPAD PRODUCT 50 SHEETS

COMMUNICATION E

LANADALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Memo

Date: October 11, 19xx

To: Pat Brown, Director, Learning Resource Center

From: Jean Hanley, President JH

Subject: Visit of City Commissioners

On Wednesday morning, October 16, we will be visited by the City Commissioners. The group is especially interested in seeing the LRC. I would appreciate it if you would alert your staff to this visit and be prepared to give the group the grand tour. They will probably have a lot of questions concerning service to our community. I know you will do your usual fine job.

COMMUNICATION F

LANADALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Memo

Date: October 14, 19xx

To: Pat Brown, Director, Learning Resource Center

From: Mally Jano, Public Relations Officer MJ

Subject: New Public Relations Campaign

64

Several persons in the community have asked me about using the Learning Resource Center. What is your latest policy? I remember you were thinking of limiting materials circulation to include only registered students. Let me know as soon as possible since I'd like to promote services available in the LRC during our new public relations campaign. Thanks!

COMMUNICATION G

To Pat

Date Oct 11 Time 2:15

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

Mr Laurence

of Community Civic Corporation Club

Phone 689-2035

Area Code Number Extension

TELEPHONED	✓	PLEASE CALL	✓
CALLED TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		URGENT	
RETURNED YOUR CALL			

Message Would like you to speak on how the LRC serves the taxpaying community at their meeting Thursday night. Would like an answer as soon as possible.

Operator

EFFICIENCY® LINE No. 5725 AN AMPAD PRODUCT 50 SHEETS

COMMUNICATION H

DATE Oct. 14

TO: Pat B.

FROM: Lonnie R., Circulation L.R.

Pat, we called the Smith's every day last week trying to get those overdue books back, and couldn't get any response. No one in the family is enrolled in Lanadale CC. I think we should make a firm rule that no one can check out books and materials unless enrolled here!! As you know, this is not the first time I've complained about this.

COMMUNICATION J

1876 W. Circle Dr.
Lanadale, Ra.
October 10, 19xx

Staff
Learning Resource Center
Lanadale Community College
Lanadale,Ra.

Dear Friends:

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate being able to use the Learning Resource Center even though I am not a student at Lanadale Community College.

This privilege has meant a great deal to me and I intend to show my gratitude with a large cash donation to be used as you see fit. You will receive my check in a few days.

Sincerely,

Jane Plentimon
Jane Plentimon

COMMUNICATION K

To Pat
Date Oct 14 Time 9:48

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

M Commissioner Green
of
Phone
Area Code Number Extension

TELEPHONED	✓	PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		URGENT	
RETURNED YOUR CALL			

Message She would like to check out Boston Business School Management Techniques when she comes on the tour. We have it.

Operator

COMMUNICATION L

LANADALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Memo

Date: Oct. 14, 19xx

To: All Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

From: Traffic Office

Subject: Visitor Parking Space Allotments

Allotments for visitor parking spaces for this school year will be finalized by the end of this month. Please determine the number of visitor parking spaces you will need and forward the number to this office by October 18th. Provide justification for any spaces requested in excess of those alloted to you last year. Spaces are limited - be sure your reasons are valid. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

COMMUNICATION M

DATE October 14

TO: Pat Brown, Director, LRC DJ

FROM: Dale Timmer, Assistant Director

Welcome back! With your permission, I'm taking Tuesday off to use up some of my accumulated time, and to assist in a family wedding.

See you Wednesday.

USING MANAGEMENT DATA IN THE PLANNING OF REFERENCE AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC SERVICE

An In-Basket/Roleplay Exercise

Martha Jane K. Zachert*

Objectives:

1. To identify and weigh given data and intangible factors and to come to a recommendation about the extension or limitation of reference and bibliographic service;

2. To prepare and present justifications for the recommendation of changes in reference and bibliographic public service;

3. To present information about changes in reference and bibliographic service to library users;

4. To direct, or participate in, a staff decision-making conference.

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*Martha Jane K. Zachert is Professor, College of Librarianship, University of South Carolina. This exercise was prepared and used with classes at the School of Library Science, Florida State University.

Using Management Data in the Planning of Reference and Bibliographic Service

Instructions: Roleplay the staff meeting at which the results of a user survey are utilized to arrive at recommendations about extending or limiting the reference and bibliographic services of a library.

Assume that the roleplayers have been appointed to a committee to assist the reference administrator in reaching a decision about whether to recommend to top library management an extension of services, a limitation of services, or a continuation of the status quo.

Assume that a call for the committee meeting has been sent out with the objective of making a decision about the recommendation(s) at this meeting. The call for the meeting was accompanied by Communications A and B.

Roleplayers: 3-5 reference department staff members

Roleplay time: 1 hour maximum

Follow-up Assignment 1: Present the recommendations of the committee to the head of reference service in a memo, with the committee's justification for each recommendation.

Follow-up Assignment 2: Draft a message to inform library users about the changes (assuming that the committee's recommendations are accepted). Specify the medium by which the message is to be conveyed.

Situational Context: The current services of your library are:

1. ready reference in your well-stocked general reference room,
2. personal instruction of users in response to individual questions about the use of the library and its materials,
3. referral to community and other extra-library agencies and resources,
4. interlibrary loan (i.e. verification and clerical maintenance of the service for outgoing loan requests),
5. circulation of reference materials (i.e., circulation of non-circulating materials from the reference desk rather than from the circulation desk),
6. group instruction of users and potential users, on demand,
7. bibliographic search service.

These services are handled as shown in Table I, with the staff complement indicated.

TABLE I. Handling and Staffing of Reference and Bibliographic Service

Service	How Handled	Staffing	Manhours/Week
1. Ready reference 2. Personal instruction 3. Referral 4. Interlibrary loan 5. Circulation of reference materials	Public Service Desk	1 professional librarian per hour 8a.m.-9p.m.; 1 extra professional librarian during 4 busiest hours daily; 15 minute follow-up time off-desk for every hour on desk	13 hrs. p.d. x 6 days= 78 hrs.; 4 hrs. p.d. x 6 days= 24 hrs. T=102 hrs. $\frac{102}{4}$ = 25.5 hrs. T= 127.5 hrs.
6. Group instruction	Reference administrator assigns any staff member qualified to handle each specific request	1 hr. preparation time for each hour of instruction. Average demand: 2 per week (static)	4 hrs.
7. Bibliographic search service	Subscription to computerized search center at nearby research institution	2 staff members trained to negotiate, formulate requests and follow-up; 30 minutes per transaction. Average demand: 20 per week (growing)	10 hrs.
		TOTAL	141.5 (i.e. 142)

Total Personnel Required for Public Reference and Bibliographic Services:

$$\frac{\text{total service hrs. required}}{\text{hrs. per work week - slippage*}} = \text{number of staff required}$$

$$\frac{142}{(38-4) = 34} = 4.2$$

*coffee breaks (30 min. per day = 3 hrs.); public service staff meetings (average: 30 min. per week = .5 hrs.); accountability (average: 30 min. per week = .5 hrs.) = 4 hrs. per week

COMMUNICATION A

M E M O

To: Reference Administor

From: Administrative Assistant

Re: Analysis of Questionnaire to Users

Sample: Total potential user population (N=5000)

Return: 40%, analyzed by Primary User Group and Secondary User Group*

Analysis: The first table shows frequency of use of listed services that are currently being offered, by percentage of respondents. The second table shows estimated future use of listed services that might potentially be offered, by percentage of respondents. Note that the respondents were identified on their response sheets as members of either the primary or secondary user group (as these have been identified by the library); and that the response to the questionnaire was evenly divided between the two groups. Both tables reflect the responses from the two user groups separately.

USE OF CURRENTLY OFFERED SERVICES

	Primary User Group (50% of R)				Secondary User Group (50% of R)			
Present Services	Once a week or more	Once a month	Once a Year	Do Not Use	Once a week or more	Once a month	Once a year	D U
1. Ready reference	10%	80%	5%	5%	80%	10%	6%	4
2. Personal instruction	1	4	25	70	45	20	25	10
3. Referral	2	2	6	90	5	15	25	55
4. Interlibrary loan	5	40	30	25	5	45	35	15
5. Circulation of reference materials	20	65	10	5	25	40	30	5
6. Group instruction	0	0	15	85	0	0	2	98
7. Bibliographic search service	0	5	15	80	0	0	20	80

*The library has designated one group of users as that to which it has "the greatest responsibility," thus it is the Primary User Group, and one group of users to which it has a lesser responsibility, the Secondary User Group.

COMMUNICATION A (continued)

PROJECTED USE OF FUTURE SERVICES*

Future Services	Primary User Group (50% of R) Once a week or more	Once a month	Once a year	Would not use	Secondary User Group (50% of R) Once a week or more	Once a month	Once a year	Would not use
1. Retrospective bibliographic searches	5%	10%	35%	50%	10%	20%	45%	25%
2. Current bibliographic searches (non-science)	1	20	19	60	0	5	20	75
3. Bibliographic listing of new reference tools	35	30	20	15	15	15	20	50
4. Identifying and/or obtaining translations from outside	30	20	20	30	0	10	20	70
5. On-the-spot translations	35	25	30	10	5	15	25	55
6. Library generated list of places and dates of meetings in subject field	15	40	30	15	5	10	5	80

*List of future services was compiled from Library Suggestion Box and from requests reported by public service staff.

COMMUNICATION B

EXCERPT FROM ANNUAL REPORT (most recent)

Public Service Reference and Bibliographic Transactions (projected from sample)

Services	Primary User Group	Secondary UG	Total
1. Ready reference	14,105	40,715	54,820
2. Personal instruction	1,185	24,745	25,930
3. Referral	815	4,415	5,230
4. Interlibrary loan	3,210	7,935	11,145
5. Circulation of reference materials	17,385	17,195	34,580
Total Public Service Desk Transactions	36,700	95,005	131,580
6. Group instruction	140	20	160
7. Bibliographic searches (computer)	710	190	900

Average Public Service Desk Transactions: Weekly, 2535; Hourly, 41

SUGGESTIONS TO THE INSTRUCTOR

1. Distribute the exercise materials far enough in advance of class that learners will have time to read the material. Class time should be spent in roleplay and debriefing.

2. More than one group of roleplayers can roleplay simultaneously. All are debriefed together.

3. It is useful to have an observer with each group of roleplayers. This person's input during the debriefing will usually supplement that of the roleplayers. If communication is being studied or emphasized along with the content of the exercise, it is essential to have observers. Roleplayers cannot note and remember all the nuances of communication while playing their roles.

4. Assume during roleplay that all staff members (i.e. all roleplayers) are equal in background and status within the reference department. This suppresses some of the normal communication processes and makes for freer discussion. It is a built-in "unreality" to improve learning by focussing on content.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING (to be used in addition to the discussion of the recommendations)

1. What kind of a library is represented in this simulation? How do you know? What difference does it make?

2. What "unreality" is present in this simulation? Why?

3. What intangibles were considered along with the survey data?

4. Is the concept of "primary users" and "secondary users" a valid one? How did this concept, and the numbers in each category, affect the design of the recommendations?

5. Are there ways in which the library could change its record-keeping to reflect more accurately the work load and accomplishment of the reference department?

6. Are there alternative or additional ways in which the library could study user needs? Advantages/disadvantages of each.